

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 02684 151624Z
ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, IS
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH GOLDA MEIR

1. CHARGE' AND POLITICAL OFFICER CALLED ON MRS. MEIR AT HER OFFICE APRIL 15. ASKED ABOUT THE RECENT CHANGE IN THE ALIGNMENT'S LEADERSHIP, SHE EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT LITTLE HAD ACTUALLY CHANGED. PERES HEADS A COLLEGIUM. NO ONE MAN CAN DICTATE POLICY IN THE LABOR PARTY, AT LEAST NOT SINCE BEN-GURION. (SHE POOH-POOHED HER OWN ABILITY TO DO SO.) RABIN'S FALL WAS A PERSONAL TRAGEDY. SHE HAD KNOWN HIM AS A CHILD; IT WAS NOT IN HIS CHARACTER TO CUT CORNERS FOR PERSONAL FINANCIAL GAIN. HE WAS AN HONEST AND MODEST INDIVIDUAL, NOT GIVEN TO CUPIDITY. HIS TRANSGRESSION WAS OBVIOUSLY AN OVERSIGHT.

2. MRS. MEIR EXPECTED THE NRP TO BE IN THE NEXT COALITION. SHE REGARDED THAT PARTY AS A TRADITIONAL AND APPROPRIATE PARTNER FOR THE ALIGNMENT IN
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PAGE 02 TEL AV 02684 151624Z

ANY GOVERNMENT. THERE IS A BOND BETWEEN LABOR AND THE NRP, BASED ON ONE COMPLEMENTING THE OTHER.

3. SHE FORESAW NO CHANGE IN POLICY AS A RESULT OF THE TRANSFER OF POWER IN THE ALIGNMENT. NO ONE IN ISRAEL, SHE STRESSED, ASIDE FROM RAKAH AND THE "KOOKS," WOULD RETURN TO THE 1967 LINES OR

ACCEPT AN ARAFAT STATE ON THE WEST BANK--AND NO ONE DOUBTS THAT THIS IS WHAT A SEPARATE PALESTINIAN STATE WOULD BE. "AS FOR THE PROBLEM OF THE TERRITORIES, NO ONE HAS EVER EXPLAINED TO ME WHY THERE WAS A WAR IN 1967 IF WITHDRAWAL WAS THE OBSTACLE TO PEACE." SHE WAS SKEPTICAL OF SADAT'S PHRASEOLOGY, PROFESSING NOT TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HE MEANT BY "NORMALIZATION." "AT LEAST FAHMY AND THE SYRIANS ARE HONEST; THEY SPEAK OF RETURNING TO THE '67 LINES--AND THEN THE 1947 BORDERS-- AND FINALLY NO MORE ISRAEL."

4. IN HER OWN DIRECT MANNER OF SPEAKING SHE TICKED OFF THE ARGUMENTS REGARDING ISRAEL'S NEED FOR DEFENSIBLE BORDERS, IRRESPECTIVE OF ANY INTERNATIONAL OR THIRD PARTY GUARANTEES. HERE ARE SAMPLES: REFERRING TO REMEMBRANCE DAY (FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST) OBSERVED YESTERDAY IN ISRAEL, SHE SAID "THE YOUNGER GENERATION, PARTICULARLY AFTER THE SIX DAY WAR, IS VERY CONSCIOUS OF THE LESSON OF THAT TRAGEDY. FAR FROM FORGETTING, THEY ARE TAKING RENEWED INTEREST IN ITS MEANING FOR THEM." ILLUSTRATING HER INSISTENCE THAT THERE WAS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR TERRITORY IN ISRAEL'S SECURITY, SHE SPOKE AT LENGTH ABOUT THE SOLITUDE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE IN THEIR OVERWHELMING TRAGEDY DURING WWII. SHE UNDERSCORED THIS BY SEVERAL POIGNANT STORIES OF APPEALS FOR HELP THAT WENT UNANSWERED. "AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 TEL AV 02684 151624Z

THOSE WHO REFUSED WERE ALL GOOD MEN; PEOPLE LIKE ROOSEVELT AND CHURCHILL, NOT ANTI-SEMITES. JUST AS IN THE YOM KIPPUR WAR. DID ANYONE DOUBT THAT HAD THE SYRIANS BROKEN OUT OF THE GOLAN HEIGHTS THEY WOULD HAVE GONE AS FAR AS THE SEA. YET ASIDE FROM THE UNITED STATES, NO OTHER COUNTRY OFFERED HELP. NOT EVEN A CENTIMETER OF LANDING SPACE IN EUROPE FOR THE AMERICAN AIRLIFT TO ISRAEL. NOT ONE OF MY SOCIALIST FRIENDS SPOKE UP IN OUR BEHALF, AND THEY ARE ALL GOOD MEN--HAROLD WILSON, WILLY BRANDT, THE DUTCH PRIME MINISTER. WHEN I TOLD THEM AT THE SOCIALIST CONGRESS IN NOVEMBER 1973 WHAT ISRAEL HAD FACED, NONE OF MY COLLEAGUES ASKED FOR THE FOOR TO REPLY. AS A FIRENT REMARKED, 'THEY WERE ALL CHOKING ON OIL.' NOT ONLY WERE THE JEWS ALONE AT A CRITICAL MOMENT, BUT SO WERE THE LEBANESE AND THE KURDS."

5. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH SHE NO LONGER PLAYS AN

ACTIVE ROLE IN POLITICS IT IS OBVIOUS THAT MRS.
MEIR REMAINS WELL INFORMED ABOUT CURRENT
DEVELOPMENTS. DESPITE HER WELL KNOWN ANTIPATHY
TOWARD PERES SHE WENT OUT OF HER WAY TO DESCRIBE
HIM AS "CAPABLE." SHE POINTED OUT THAT THE LABOR
PARTY, AS A LARGE ORGANIZATION, CAN INCLUDE A
WIDE RANGE OF VIEWS, HAWKS AND DOVES. IT IS
CLEAR THAT HER VIEWS ON THE MIDDLE EAST
CONFLICT HAVE HARDLY WAVERED OVER THE YEARS.
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